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A

SERMON

Preach'd before the Right Honourable the

LORD-MAYOR,

THE

ALDERMEN,

AND

GOVERNORS of the ſeveral HOSPITALS of the CITY of *LONDON*;

AT THE

PARISH-CHURCH of St. *Bridget*,

On MONDAY in *Eaſter*-Week, *March* 26. 1733.

Being one of the Anniverſary Spittal-Sermons.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,

NICOLAS Lord Biſhop of St. *David's*.

CLAGETT

LONDON:

Printed for JOHN PEMBERTON, at the *Golden Buck*, againſt St. *Dunſtan's* Church in *Fleetſtreet*. 1733.

BARBER, *Mayor.*

Tueſday *the Third Day of* April, *One Thouſand, Seven Hundred, and Thirty-three, and in the Sixth Year of the Reign of King* GEORGE *the Second, of* Great-Britain, *and ſo forth.*

IT is ordered, That the Thanks of this Court be given to the Right Reverend Father in God, the the Lord Biſhop of St. *David's*, for his Sermon preached before this Court and the Governors of the ſeveral Hoſpitals of this CITY, at the Pariſh-Church of St. *Bridget*, on *Monday* in *Eaſter-Week* laſt; and that his Lordſhip be deſired to print the ſame.

JACKSON.

1 Cor. x. 24.

Let no man ſeek his own, but every man another's wealth.

BY *another's wealth* in this place is to be underſtood the good, or intereſt, or advantage of another; and the true ſenſe of the Words is, Let no one be ſo intent upon taking care of himſelf and his own affairs, as, at the ſame time, not to let the affairs of others alſo have a ſhare of his concern.

This is an excellent precept of our religion, and it is indeed an honour to that book, which we Chriſtians profeſs to make the rule of our life and behaviour, that this and the like directions are ſo frequently to be found therein; and it would ſtill be a greater recommendation of our faith to the world, if it were much more generally obſerved and practiſed than it is. It was an obſervation of * a great genius of our own country, That *there never was, in the world, any philoſophy, or ſect, or religion, or law, or inſtitution, that carried up and exalted the good and*

* *Lord* Bacon.

welfare of others ſo high, and depreſſed the good and welfare of a man's ſingle ſelf ſo low, as the religion of Chriſt has done. That no one might think himſelf excuſed from attending to this rule of the apoſtle in the text, the direction is general, and extends to all perſons whatſoever. The riches of the wealthy, the wiſdom of the knowing, the greatneſs of perſons in power and authority, are ſo far from being privileges excuſing men from having a due regard to the good of others, that the ſeveral advantageous circumſtances I have mentioned are ſo many arguments to bind the perſons ſo diſtinguiſhed yet more ſtrongly to this duty, and to exert themſelves with ſo much the greater zeal and vigour in the performance thereof. How comes it then to paſs, that a duty, to which men are ſo univerſally obliged, ſhould be ſo much omitted, as it is? For if we look abroad into the world, it is to be feared, that we ſhall find too much of that narrowneſs and contractedneſs of ſpirit, which the text cautions us againſt; and too little of that care and concern for others, which is here enjoined. Health, and eaſe, and pleaſure, and plenty of the comforts and conveniencies of life, are ſuch things, as men are apt enough to deſire, and look after, and provide, for themſelves; and when this end is once compaſſed, they are many times apt to look on the work as done, for which they came into the world, and to conſider their main point as gained, and that there remains nothing now, but to ſit down and enjoy their own good condition, and reap all that ſatisfaction and joy, that men commonly find, when arrived to proſperous circumſtances. As for other men, the reſt of mankind, they are contented to leave them to take the courſes, which they may think beſt for their welfare, and to ſhift, as well as they can, for themſelves. It will diminiſh none of their happineſs, though they ſhould ſee things to go ill with others, nor will it make them more happy, to obſerve them to go well,

well. And if a man, thus wrapt up in himſelf, is but ſucceſsful enough to make one happy, he has made all ſo, that he is concerned for. If his own family, and his near relations, and dependants, are taken into his plan, they are to be looked on as a part of himſelf, and it is ſtill himſelf, in a manner, he is taking care of, when he is doing any thing for them; this is ſtill confining all good offices to objects at home, and not extending them, as he ought to do, to all around him, to thoſe who are afar off as well as to thoſe who are near. But how is a temper of this kind conſiſtent with the excellent doctrine of the text? Moſt plainly not at all; it is as oppoſite to it, and inconſiſtent with it, as is poſſible. And therefore there muſt be ſome miſtake, ſome falſe reaſoning, that men ſuffer themſelves to run into about this matter, in order to keep their minds quiet and eaſy, under ſo plain a violation of a precept of Chriſtianity. And the miſtake is, too generally, this, they think that all is well with them, and that no one has a right to complain of them, if they do but take care to hurt no body, and do not, on any occaſion, allow themſelves to defraud, or injure, or oppreſs their neighbour. If any one happens to be a ſufferer by their means, they will indeed look on themſelves as bound to make him reparation for the wrong, and to endeavour to heal the wound of their own making. Farther than this they do not ſeem ſenſible of any demands, which their neighbour may have upon them. And the truth of the matter is, that, in caſes, where no breach can be pleaded of any human law, their neighbour has no ſuch claim upon them, as he can proſecute in any of the courts of juſtice of this world, he is not entitled to any relief from the civil magiſtrate, and that, becauſe the cognizance of the crime of uncharitableneſs is what appertains to another and an higher juriſdiction, and is one of thoſe

reſerved caſes, that God, the ſupreme judge of mankind, muſt be ſuppoſed to keep in his own hands.

We read in the parable (*Luke* x. 31, 32. &c.) that the prieſt and the Levite in their journey came, and looked on the man, that had *fallen among thieves*, and was *left* by them *half dead* in the road, and that *they paſſed by on the other ſide*. Not a ſtep did they take towards comforting or relieving him, and they thought perhaps, they were not much to blame for *paſſing by* a poor creature in diſtreſs, and giving themſelves no trouble about him, ſo long as they were not themſelves the thieves, that had *ſtript* and *wounded* him. But this was not a way of thinking, nor a conduct, which Chriſt could approve or allow of in any who profeſſed to be his followers. We Chriſtians have *not ſo learned Chriſt*. We are taught otherwiſe and muſt have widely different notions of theſe things, if we receive *the truth, as it is in Jeſus*. To condemn a carriage of this kind, and to ſhew us the great blameableneſs thereof, was plainly the intent of our Saviour in this parable; and, as crooked things do moſt appear ſo, when viewed at the ſame time, and compared with things, that are ſtrait, after giving us the above-mentioned inſtances of want of humanity, he tells us, what their duty was, and what they and all others, in the like circumſtances, ought to have done, in the example of the good *Samaritan*. That he was to *love his neighbour* was a maxim in religion, that the *Samaritan* had undoubtedly learnt, and this was likewiſe a maxim, that the prieſt and the Levite, one would think, muſt have heard of, as well as he; but they did not, or would not, underſtand it, as he did, as importing, that every one in diſtreſs, whom they could help, was *their neighbour*, and that helping him, in ſuch caſes, was no other than that *love* that they were bound to ſhow him. Therefore our Saviour propoſes to the lawyer, whom he was diſcourſing with, the pattern of the

compaſſionate *Samaritan* to copy after, and, what he ſays to him, on that occaſion, he ſays to all of us, *Go and do thou likewiſe.* And the exhortation of the holy apoſtle, in the text, is the ſame with the doctrine of his great maſter, in that parable, *Let no man ſeek his own, but every man anothers wealth.*

And more is intended in this exhortation, than that we ſhould only do a good work now and then, and, as it were, by chance. If we never give our alms, but when a ſight of ſome wretched object of charity preſents itſelf to us, and almoſt forces them from us, if we never give, but upon great importunity and ſollicitation, or when we ſhould be aſhamed and out of countenance not to do as others do, or only upon occaſion of our receiving the holy ſacrament; this is no argument of a real love and charity for our poor brethren, nor of our having that conſtant and habitual concern for their good, that the text ſeems to require. *Seeking the wealth*, or good, *of others*, is an expreſſion, that imports more than this can amount to: It is having their good ſincerely and affectionately at heart, charging ourſelves with it, in a manner, as if it were part of our ordinary buſineſs and employment, and looking on it, as one of thoſe affairs, for which we were ſent into the world. And that no one may imagine, that this is requiring too much at our hands, or ſetting up the duty too high, it ſhould be conſidered, that this matter, well weighed, will be found to be no more, than what was required and enjoined in one of the great commandments of the law, to wit, *Thou ſhall love thy neighbour, as thy ſelf.*

And I cannot, I think, more ſeaſonably recommend to you this truly Chriſtian ſpirit, than on the preſent occaſion, when we are met together on the account of ſo many noble and uſeful charities; which have not only owed their birth to this ſpirit at the firſt, but have all along had

had their conſtant ſupplies of nouriſhment from it, and have been greatly ſtrengthned and ſupported by it from time to time, and which, as this excellent ſpirit prevails more or leſs amongſt us, will for ever, in proportion, either flouriſh, or decay. I ſhall hope therefore, it will be no improper uſe of the preſent opportunity, if I ſet myſelf to lay before you ſome of thoſe motives, which ought, I apprehend, to have the greateſt weight with us, in order to preſerve and cheriſh in us that generous concern for the good of others, which the apoſtle recommends in the text.

Now the moſt contrary thing in the world to this excellent Chriſtian principle is, the ſordid vice of ſelfiſhneſs; that poiſonous weed, which is of ſo very malignant a nature, that in whatever minds it once gets root, it will ſuffer no good quality to flouriſh or live near it. This is one of thoſe foul degeneracies prophecied of in the new teſtament, and which are to come to paſs in the latter days of the church: for amongſt ſeveral apoſtates expreſsly foretold to come in the latter times (2 *Tim.* iii. 2, 3, 4.) one ſort of them, as we find there, and thoſe ſet in the front, and mentioned even before any of the reſt, are perſons, who ſhall be ſelfiſh; the holy ſpirit particularly foretelling in that place, that *men ſhall be lovers of their own ſelves.*

This then being a temper of mind, againſt which the Chriſtians of all ages ought more eſpecially to be upon their guard, and of which one may ſay, as St. *Paul* did of *Elymas, the ſorcerer*, that it is *the enemy of all righteouſneſs*; before I proceed, it will be convenient that I premiſe ſomething concerning the nature of this vice of ſelfiſhneſs, that ſo we may be fully appriſed of it, and know of a certain what it is.

Moſt certain it is, and it muſt be granted, that all ſelf-love has not the nature of ſin. To love ourſelves in a certain

certain meaſure and degree is highly reaſonable, and natural, and even neceſſary to the preſervation of ourſelves. And the principle, which puts us upon this, is ſo far from being contrary to nature, that, as ſome of the ancient philoſophers have well obſerved, they are the *prima naturæ, the very firſt directions and admonitions of nature*, which cauſe us to have a love for ourſelves. As long as we carry theſe bodies about us, a proper care is to be taken of them. As long as we are ſtationed as inhabitants of this world, it is but right, that we make ſome ſort of proviſion, that we may not live here uneaſy for want of proper accommodations. There is a juſtice we owe to our health, to our eſtates, to our good names, to our families, and, to be ſure, to our ſouls. And if we were not to love our own ſelves, how could ſelf-love be a rule for our loving others, according to the great commandment before-mentioned, *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf?* But though ſelf-love, rightly conſidered, be what nature in its pureſt ſtate cannot but be ſuppoſed to approve and to recommend to us, yet to love our ſelves, ſo as not to care for or love others, this is not dictated by pure and uncorrupt nature, but by nature wretchedly vitiated and depraved. But then if there be a ſelf-love, which is no other than a natural thing, which has its foundation in reaſon, and which a wiſe and good man cannot be ſuppoſed to be without, how comes it to paſs, that the ſcripture ſometimes ſpeaks of ſelf-love in the general, as if there were in it the nature of ſin? Why does the apoſtle, in the place forementioned, rank *lovers of their own ſelves* with ſinners, as if that were the character of bad men? And why again does the apoſtle, here in the words of my text, exhort us in this manner, *Let no man ſeek his own, but every man another's wealth*, as if we ought to have no regard to, or care for, ourſelves at all? I anſwer, That the ſcripture doth this, to caution us, in the

ſtrongeſt manner, againſt that inordinate ſelf-love, which wholly excludes others from having their due ſhare in our love, and which confines all love to ourſelves. It is ſuppoſed all the while, that under proper reſtrictions and limitations, the natural ſelf-love, which is originally, and that for wiſe and good reaſons, implanted in us, will hold, and continue, and exert itſelf, on all proper occaſions, for our good, as it needs muſt; and it is impoſſible, nay, I will add, unfitting, it ſhould ever be removed. What therefore religion muſt be apprehended to direct in this caſe is, not that we ſhould endeavour to remove or extirpate out of our minds all love of our ſelves (for that would be neither fitting, nor poſſible) but that, like other paſſions, we ſhould regulate and govern it, and hinder it from running into thoſe exceſſes, to which nature, corrupted as it is and depraved, is but too apt to carry it. It is uſual in Scripture to ſpeak of things, which are to be done only in a certain meaſure and degree, as if they were not to be done at all. Thus ſays our Saviour, *Lay not up for yourſelves treaſures upon earth, Labour not for the meat that periſheth*, as if we were not to take any pains at all, in order to a comfortable livelihood, nor to think at all of getting, or increaſing, an eſtate. The meaning is, We are not to do theſe things, we are to neglect all earthly proviſions, to have them little, or not at all, at heart, in compariſon of that much greater care we ought to have for our ſouls, and their everlaſting welfare. So as to the point before us, the apoſtle exhorts thus, *Let no man ſeek his own, but every man anothers wealth*, as if we were to do nothing for ourſelves. His meaning is, Our care for ourſelves ought by no means to be ſuch, and in that exceſſive degree, as to admit of no affection to, or care for, others. For it is not unworthy of our notice, that the apoſtle's character of uncharitable men, that they are *lovers of their own ſelves*, and his precept in the text,

Let

Let no man ſeek his own, but every man anothers wealth, are explained by an exhortation of his, in the epiſtle to the *Philippians* (ch. ii. 4.) *Look not every man on his own things, but every man* KAI᾽ τὰ ἑτέρων, ALSO *on the things of others*, That is to ſay, That is the faulty love of ourſelves, which excludes all love and regard to others. There is then a ſelf-love, that is natural and juſt, and there is a ſelf-love, that is ſinful; and it is a very eaſy matter to diſtinguiſh them in ourſelves. For do we make the happineſs of others an intereſt of our own, and do we find ourſelves, in a manner, hurt, or wounded, by their misfortunes? Have we a brotherly feeling of the good or ill of others, as if the caſe were our own, and not theirs? Do we find a ſenſible pleaſure ariſing in ourſelves, upon the proſperity of our neighbour, and do we ſympathize with him, whenever, by any of the numerous accidents of life, we find him afflicted and a ſufferer? Are we diſpoſed not only *to rejoice with them, who rejoice*, but alſo *to mourn with them that mourn?* A man may ſoon find, how it is with him, as to this particular. A little obſervation of himſelf will help him to make a thorough diſcovery to himſelf, which claſs of men he is really and truly of, whether of the ſelfiſh, or of thoſe, who are not ſo. For if his charity, which may be allowed to begin at home, goes no farther, but ends there too, if he ſees no ſuch quality in himſelf, as a love, or benevolence, ſhedding itſelf abroad, if he knows in his own heart, that he never gives any alms at all in private, and that, whenever he is called upon, or invited, to give his help to publick charities, he is ever more ready to make objections to the end and deſign of ſuch charities, or to find fault with the conduct and management of them, than to be contributing and aſſiſting thereto, if he perceives, in general, that the ſtate and condition of others does not move or affect him at all, and he is neither made eaſy, or uneaſy, by any change hap-

pening therein, if he counts he is neither the better nor the worſe for any think that befals others, if it be indifferent to him, whether they be in health, or in ſickneſs, at eaſe, or in pain, cloathed, or naked, in proſperity, or adverſity, and, in all events, that affect them, he be the ſame untouched and unconcerned perſon, if, when others are overtaken with misfortunes, inſtead of running to their help, he can content himſelf with the way of thinking of that ſelfiſh one in *Euripides*, Οὐδὲν μέλει μοι· τἀμὰ γὼ καλῶς ἔχει. "*That is no concern of mine: I am full as happy, as I need be;*" it is very plain, that this man is not one, who conforms to the apoſtolical rule in the text, but he may aſſuredly conclude himſelf to be one of that degenerate part of mankind, whom the apoſtle deſcribes to be, *lovers of their own ſelves.*

To be more particular, there are *three* vices, which, wherever they are, either find a man ſelfiſh, or elſe make him ſo; and they are pride, and covetouſneſs, and a ſlothful diſpoſition.

1. If a man be proud, 'tis not to be wondered at, that he ſhould likewiſe be ſelfiſh. We do not uſually trouble ourſelves with things, which we deſpiſe. It is the apoſtle's advice (*Heb.* x. 24.) κατανοῶμεν ἀλλήλους, *Let us conſider one another, Let us attend to one anothers caſes*; but that is a thing, which a proud man is not very likely to do. A man may ſet that extraordinary value upon himſelf, as to look upon the reſt of mankind, in compariſon, not to be worth his thinking of. Inſtead of being convinced, that he was born to be ſerviceable to others, and to do them good, he may perhaps, from conceiving too highly of himſelf, be induced to think, that all others were born to pay him honour, that from himſelf nothing is due to others, not ſo much as good will, or charity, or any one good office, but that from others he is entitled to

every inſtance of regard they can ſhow him, and to every ſervice they can do him. And this has been the caſe of that great enterprizer, *Alexander* of *Macedon*, and of ſome others, who, copying after his model, have affected to be thought the great and mighty conquerors of their times, and who to their own ambition and wrong thirſt of glory have not ſcrupled to ſacrifice even thouſands of thoſe very lives, which, by their particular ſtations and relations, they were bound to cheriſh and protect.

2. So likewiſe if a man be of a covetous temper, the great bias of that mans mind muſt not be, to be charitable, or to ſerve others, but to enrich himſelf, and nothing is plainer, than that he, who is a lover of money, muſt alſo in the apoſtle's ſenſe, in that ſenſe, in which ſelf-love is juſtly to be blamed, be likewiſe *a lover of himſelf*. In the account of him, who is covetous, whatever he has, though in never ſo great abundance, is too little for him, and every little almoſt is too much for his neighbour; he is altogether for himſelf; as to charity, that he looks upon as a thing, that muſt, of courſe, diminiſh the heap, he wants perpetually to be increaſed, and for that he finds no diſpoſition; and he cares not who *wants*, provided that he himſelf may *abound*.

3. But beſides, there is a certain blame-worthy indolence, and unactiveneſs of temper, which often accompanies a ſelfiſh ſpirit, and is an argument thereof. There are divers good turns, which others need at our hands, which we cannot do for them without allowing them ſome part of our time and leiſure, and affording them ſome ſhare of our pains and trouble, and this is what the man who is ſelfiſh will not eaſily conſent to. If he is but juſt to himſelf and his own concerns, he acquieſces in that, and ſtops there. About other mens affairs he is habitually

habitually careleſs. He can exerciſe himſelf in conſulting and acting for his own good, and can buſy himſelf in that, but muſt be excuſed from going any farther, and ſo all his thoughts and care are confined to himſelf, and center there, and the reſt of mankind are to be left to make out their way, and to do, as well as they can, for themſelves.

And now having ſaid thus much concerning ſelfiſhneſs, or that vicious ſelf-love, that makes men to be the reverſe of what it was the intent of the precept in the text, and indeed of the whole tenor of the goſpel, to make them, I proceed as I intended, to lay down ſome motives, to induce us to have a charitable concern for others, and to make us active and zealous in promoting their welfare and happineſs.

1. *Firſt* then, Let us conſider, that the doctrine of the text is no other than the doctrine of nature and of that reaſon, that all of us carry about us. That we are not born only for ourſelves, is the natural dictate of every reaſonable mind. I have obſerved in this diſcourſe, that the ſinful ſelf-love proceeds not from nature in its original, but degenerate ſtate. For why? The ſame nature, which neceſſitates us to love ourſelves, prompts us to mind alſo the good of others, as what is our bounden duty. And this the very frame and conſtitution of our nature ſuppoſes, becauſe man is plainly made for ſociety. By the natures God has given us we are capable of converſing with, and aſſiſting, and ſuccouring, and comforting one another, and of contributing to the happineſs of each other. If we conſider the great body of mankind, we may look upon it, as a ſociety at large, whereof all individuals are members in particular, and they are to act as members thereof within the particular ſocieties, to which they belong, and in their ſphere, for the good of the whole;

whole; they are to ſerve their country, and their fellow members, according to their power and capacity. As for that man, who is unconcerned for others, he quite forgets the common relation we ſtand in to one another, as ſociable beings, and members of ſociety; nay, he doth, in effect, renounce this honour and privilege of his nature, who, though living in the midſt of the community, is of as little uſe to the reſt of the world, as if he had ſequeſtred himſelf to a deſert or a cell, where no one can be the better for him. When God asked *Cain*, (*Gen.* iv. 9.) after the unnatural murder of his brother, *Where is Abel, thy brother? he ſaid, I know not; am I my brother's keeper?* a rude and unmannerly anſwer this! but that is not all; it argued, that he was ſo depraved, and had ſo far put off humanity, that he was utterly inſenſible of the obligation of nature; for he was indeed his *brother's keeper*, in ſome ſenſe and meaſure, and he was to watch over him, ſo far as he well could, for his preſervation, ſafety, and welfare.

Let one, that has been, in his time, the moſt ſelfiſh man in the world, but fall himſelf into miſery and misfortunes, and that will make even him ſee and feel, that men from their common humanity, are obliged to be concerned for and to help one another. He will not only wiſh for and deſire relief, but he will think it hard too, if he has it not, and he will even make it matter of complaint, that others do not their bounden duty, if they do not afford it him. The great error in this point, that he was formerly led into by a vicious ſelf-love, will then vaniſh, and he will then ſee things, as they are.

2. If we are obliged to have a real concern for the happineſs of others, as we are men, much more, as I obſerve in the *ſecond* place, are we obliged to this, as we are Chriſtians. For we are tied and knit cloſer together by Chri-

ſtianity than by common humanity. This the apoſtle ſhows (1 *Cor.* xii.) where he compares the church, the myſtical body of Chriſt, for this reaſon, to the natural body, to ſignify the love, that we, who are members of that body, ought to bear to one another, and the tender regard we ought to have for each other's welfare. For *in the* natural *body there is no ſchiſm, but the members have the ſame care one of another, and if one of the members ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with it, and if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.* So it ſhould be in the myſtical body, and its members. In them too there ſhould be the like aptneſs to mutual help and the ſame harmony and ſympathy. And the apoſtle's argumen for our being true and juſt to one another (*Epheſ.* iv. 25.) is likewiſe an argument for our being charitable and doing good, to wit, That *we are members one of another.* Accordingly this our Saviour made the mark or ſign of his diſciples, *By this ſhall all men know*, ſays he, *that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another.* And indeed the Chriſtians of the firſt ages were known and diſtinguiſhed from other people by this. Their care of the poor man and the ſtranger was ſo notorious and remarkable, that their enemy *Julian*, who had had his education amongſt them, and could not but know them well, does them the juſtice, in divers places of his writings, to acknowledge it. And *Lucian*, taking notice of this practice of theirs, obſerves, how eaſy a thing it was, in thoſe days, for the crafty and cunning to make an advantage to themſelves of this liberal and beneficent temper of the Chriſtians. But ſo it was, by the accounts of their enemies, as well as their friends, that the firſt Chriſtians were ſo cloſely linked together in the bond of charity, ſo really concerned for one another's ſtate, ſo ready upon all occaſions to miniſter to the neceſſities, to ſupply the wants, and to promote the welfare of one another, that greater

mutual

mutual kindneſs could not have been ſhowed, if the whole body of believers, the entire *houſhold of faith*, had been all of the ſame kindred, and had been but one family according to the fleſh.

3. A *third* motive I ſhall urge to a charitable regard to the good of others is, the great example of our bleſſed Lord, who, *for us men, and for our ſalvation*, that he might deliver us out of a miſerable ſtate, *came down from heaven*, and condeſcended to be incarnate, and to be *a man of ſorrows*, and at laſt crucified. A moſt illuſtrious inſtance of a charitable concern for others, greater than which cannot be conceived or imagined! What a ſurprizing degree of love was this? For our redemption the eternal ſon of God, no leſs a perſon, ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτὸν, *emptied himſelf, he humbled himſelf*, to become man, to live a ſorrowful life and to dye an accurſed death. Suppoſing that we had never ſo great a concern for the good of others, what could we do for them like this? What compariſon can it bear or admit of, that one man ſhould be charitable to another, and that the ſon of God, for man's ſake, ſhould conſent to become man? This is a degree of concern for others, that ſhould make us aſhamed to reflect, that our great maſter ſhould do ſo much good for all of us, and that it is with ſo much difficulty, that we bring ourſelves to do the leaſt good thing for one another. Thou can'ſt relieve thy brother's poverty, without impoveriſhing thyſelf. Thou can'ſt help to enlarge him from a priſon, without making thyſelf a priſoner in his ſtead. Thou can'ſt give him food and raiment, and yet leave thyſelf as far from wanting either of them, as thou waſt before. And, after all, what is that mighty expence, to which it is likely thy concern for him ſhould put thee? It may coſt thee a ſmall pittance of thy wealth, it may demand of thee perhaps ſome portion of thy time, it

may require a little of thy care and thought and trouble. But what is all this, what is the utmoſt the moſt charitable man in the world can do for his brother, when compared with the aſtoniſhing inſtance of the love of our bleſſed Lord to mankind?

4. A *fourth* motive to a charitable regard to others, and miniſtring to them accordingly is, the great pleaſure, that ever muſt attend ſuch a practice. And thus it is true, that all the good we do our neighbour may be reſolved into ſelf-love, if we conſider that pleaſure redounding from it, that we may lawfully and honeſtly propound to ourſelves, as a motive to our duty in this kind. Sometimes indeed ſelf-love is a corrupt end of doing good offices to others; as for inſtance, when alms are given, purely that they may be ſeen of men, and when a man does any good thing, only to be taken notice of, and to receive the applauſe of men, in which caſe, though others may be the better for the benefit received from him, yet does the act loſe all its value and gracefulneſs, by proceeding from ſo mean a principle, and becauſe there was a pitiful ſelf-love at the bottom of it; and as ſuch an one does ſome good works openly, to wit, only to get the eſteem and praiſe of the world, ſo for the ſame reaſon, he will be ſure never to do any good work in ſecret. But ſelf-love is a very lawful and honourable inducement to do good to others, when we propoſe to our ſelves the pleaſure and ſatisfaction there is in doing it. As to alms-giving, ſays our Saviour, *It is more bleſſed to give, than to receive*, it is more bleſſed to ſhow kindneſſes, than to have them done us.

In the common courſe of human affairs it cannot be otherwiſe, but that there muſt be much miſery in the world. Let us but take a ſhort view of ſome of the ordinary occurrences of life, and of ſome of thoſe caſes,

frequently happening, which have deſervedly gained the attention to them of the piety and charity of this great city. In one place, a child, almoſt as ſoon as it is born, utterly unable to help itſelf, and wholly unprovided for, is deprived of that affectionate parent, who would naturally have done every thing poſſible for its happineſs, and comes to be left in the hands of ſtrangers, with nothing, but its cries and its innocence, to ſollicit and plead for it. In another place, the hands, that were wont to maintain many, and to diffuſe plenty, and joyfulneſs, through a whole family, are diſabled by ſickneſs from doing ſo any more. Beſides, numberleſs are the accidents, by which men daily loſe the uſe of their limbs, become maimed and lame, and are utterly unable to do any thing for themſelves or others, though never ſo well diſpoſed to induſtry; and for diſaſters of this ſort we need not go ſo far as to the camp, the experience of every day almoſt ſhows us, that we have numbers of them nearer home, and at our very doors. Nor are theſe brittle and frail bodies of ours the only part of us which is ſubject to accidents. Our very minds are not exempt. Some men are born into the world with that unhappy frame, that they never in all their lives arrive, as others do, to a competent uſe of their reaſon; and how often does it happen, that by a fright, or a fever, or ſome ſhocking calamity, or ſome violent paſſion overſetting men, or by ſome unhappy temperament of the blood and ſpirits, which men could neither foreſee nor prevent, they are all of a ſudden deprived of the right uſe of their underſtandings, and, till they are recovered from that ſtate by medicines and a proper regimen, muſt be kept, under due reſtraint, from hurting others or themſelves, and can be no longer looked on, or treated with, as part of the rational world? And theſe are the involuntarily miſerable, whoſe miſery cannot, with any truth, be ſaid to be their own choice. But there are, be-

ſides theſe, the miſerable of another ſpecies, and they are thoſe, who are voluntarily ſo; I mean the idle and vicious part of the poor, thoſe of them eſpecially, who have health, and ſtrength, and youth, on their ſide, the vagrants which infeſt our ſtreets, and often intercept the alms, that were better beſtowed in other places, thoſe, in a word, who prefer lazineſs and beggary to the comforts of an honeſt calling; and the great miſery of this ſort of wretches is, that if ſome body does not interpoſe for them, who has a greater regard and a truer love for them, than they have for themſelves, and endeavour, when nothing elſe will do, to bring them to themſelves by puniſhment, and to reform them by diſcipline, the conſequence of their being left to themſelves will be, that, in order to maintain themſelves in their vices, they will in a little time, in all likelihood, be hardy enough to venture to live, in a manner, in a ſtate of war with all mankind, and will allow themſelves in thefts, and robberies, and murders, crimes, which will render them deteſtable, both in the ſight of God and of man. And theſe we are to reckon the miſerable of their own making, and a very great degree of miſery it is (though they are not as yet become as thoroughly bad as is poſſible, nor have as yet *filled up* the utmoſt meaſure of *iniquity* they are capable of) to be, as the idle, and vicious, and unemployed poor always are, in the high road to deſtruction both of ſoul and body; and for that reaſon it cannot but be every good man's wiſh, that inſtances of ſuch unhappy creatures were not near ſo frequent amongſt us, as they are.

It was the ſaying of a very charitable man, upon obſerving the ſtate of mankind in general, and how much ſin and miſery there was amongſt them, *How can a good man be happy, when all the world is thus miſerable about him?* He has plainly but one way of being ſo, and that is by endeavouring, in his own ſphere, to reduce and leſſen the

the quantity of misery, which he sees, and knows of, in the world, as much as is possible. For the studying and trying to do this, and in any degree, succeeding therein, is ever attended with a joy and pleasure, that is divine and ravishing, and of a kind much superior to any thing, which he, who is mean enough to be selfish, can ever relish or enjoy.

5. And this brings me to a *fifth* consideration, to stir us up to seek the good of others, as well as our own, which is, That the sense of having done this is what will be found to please us best at last. What, I beseech you, will it signify to me at the end of life, that I have lived only to myself, indulged all manner of ways to myself, cared for none but myself, enjoyed my ease, and taken my fill of pleasure? Is there any comfort in thinking of this at our *latter end?* None at all. This cannot yield any pleasurable reflection. Nay, a person, who has employed his time no better than this amounts to, is so much the more uneasy on the death-bed, by how much more he lived to himself, when now he can indulge himself no more, and all the ease and pleasure, he ever lived in, leaves not after it the least comfortable relish or remembrance. A selfish, and unprofitable, and uncharitable life can do no otherwise than deliver a man over to a foolish and uncomfortable end. Hast thou indeed done good in thy generation? Hast thou been duly mindful, on all occasions, *quem te Deus esse jussit, & humanâ quâ parte locatus es in re*, that is, *what all the several duties were, which thy situation in the world required of thee?* Canst thou say, and with truth, "I have not come into the world for nothing, "I have not lived in human society for nothing, but others "have been the better for me, the sick, the needy, the di- "stressed, the ignorant, those of all sorts, to whom my "beneficence could be extended, within my sphere?" Has

God

God had thy beſt ſervices from thee, and haſt thou been uſeful and beneficial to the world? There is comfort and joy in thinking of, and reflecting upon this, when all the eaſe, and pleaſure, of ſelf-indulgence, yea, all worldly pomp, and ſtate, and honour, are paſt away, and gone, and are now utterly inſignificant things to us. It is not, we may be aſſured, the good we have enjoyed ourſelves, but the good we have done to others, that will ſatisfy, and pleaſe us, and ſtand us in ſtead when we come to die.

6. Let us conſider in the *ſixth* place, how very needful the virtue required in the text is to recommend us to God. For this is that beneficent temper the apoſtle ſpeaks of in the thirteenth chapter of this very epiſtle from whence the words of the text are taken, without which all the excellencies, we can to pretend to, are of no account in the ſight of God. The chapter begins thus, *Though I ſpeak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as ſounding braſs or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and underſtand all myſteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, ſo that I could remove mountains, and I have no charity, I am nothing.* And here it is obſervable, that one of the excellent properties and effects of this ſo neceſſary grace of charity mentioned by the apoſtle in that chapter, amongſt the reſt, is this (as we read *v.* 5.) That it is by no means ſelfiſh. *Charity ſeeketh not her own.* The ſame word is uſed in the original for *ſeeking* both there and in the text, and the paſſage is plainly parallel to the words I have been diſcourſing upon, and is very fitly expounded by them, *Let no man ſeek his own, but every man another's wealth.*

7. I ſhould now have done with the ſeveral motives which ſhould induce us, and prevail with us, to have a proper

proper regard to the good of others, but there is one motive yet behind, which I cannot well omit on this occaſion, and I muſt not forget to remind you, in the *ſeventh* and *laſt* place, how much we are concerned, as proteſtants, not to be defective in this point of charity. We are convinced (and that upon very good grounds) that *the faith*, we of this church profeſs, is no other, than that, *which was once delivered to the ſaints*, and we cannot but be ſenſible, how neceſſary it is to a true *faith*, that it ſhow itſelf in *working by love*. Could it appear that we were more wanting herein than others, or did in the leaſt fall ſhort of thoſe from whoſe communion we have ſeparated our ſelves, it would give our adverſaries of the church of *Rome* ſuch a cauſe of triumph, as I perſuade myſelf, they have not at this day. What has given an handle to ſome to miſrepreſent us, in this particular, has been this, that we do not, as they do, place merit in good works, nor make them, with the council of *Trent*, the efficient cauſe of our juſtification. And the truth is, we think it reaſon enough for doing them, that we are aſſured, that they are well pleaſing to God, that God has plainly required them at our hands, and has promiſed to reward them. Thoſe great and excellent charities, which call us together at this time, are a plain vindication of us, that we are very far from being *Solifidians*, or perſons wholly unmindful of good works: and may the argument, by a continual increaſe and flouriſhing of charity amongſt us, grow every day ſtill ſtronger in our favour. We have before us the excellent patterns of our proteſtant anceſtors, to excite us to be charitable and helpful to others, as they were. One of the firſt of the glorious fruits of the happy reformation was, the erecting and endowing, by the crown, and by private perſons, ſome of thoſe truly uſeful foundations, which have ever ſince afforded ſo much help and comfort to the needy and diſtreſſed, and which continue a laſting

credit

credit and honour to this great and opulent city. The zeal of the firſt friends of the reformation diſtinguiſhed itſelf ſo early in this work, that the noble and beneficent temper of our countrymen ſeems only to have waited for the removal of popery, and the clearing of ſome convents of an uſeleſs ſet of friars, that had dwelt in them, to be able to ſhine forth in its full luſtre and glory, and to ſhow itſelf in far more ſubſtantial inſtances of charity, than any they had ever gone into before. It is no ſign of a ſelfiſh religion, nor of a religion, which does not very ſtrongly put us upon caring for others, that it has now, for no leſs time, than near *two hundred* years laſt paſt, been daily and continually ſhowing its ſpirit and genius, in ſome of the moſt laudable kinds of charity, that the heart of man could contrive, or think of, for the relief of the unhappy.

And now that juſtice may be done to thoſe worthy perſons, to whoſe skill, and faithfulneſs, and generous concern for the good of the miſerable of their fellow-citizens and others, the proſperous eſtate of ſuch deſigns as theſe, muſt ever, in a great meaſure, be owing, it is fit you ſhould be acquainted with the preſent ſtate and condition of the hoſpitals of this city.

Here the Report was read.

And here let me prevail with you to caſt a look back upon *two* of our famous hoſpitals, thoſe of St. *Bartholomew* and St. *Thomas*, and to reflect a little upon the great good that has been done there within the compaſs of the ſingle year laſt paſt. It muſt doubtleſs occaſion a very ſenſible pleaſure in every compaſſionate breaſt to hear, how much benefit the miſerable of our own ſpecies have received from thoſe places in that time, and how many,

who

who were ſo very lately objects of pity, have returned from thence, in ſo ſhort a ſpace, happily altered, with healthful bodies, and minds full of joy, and, we will hope too, with thanks to God in their mouths, to their own dwellings. By the account of the laſt year (and, in this, former years have not been behind them, but rather exceeded them) in theſe *two* hoſpitals only, taken together, ſo great a number, as between *eight and nine thouſand* wounded, maimed, ſick, and diſeaſed perſons, have met with the relief they wanted, and are returned home to their ſeveral buſineſſes and occupations, and above *a thouſand* more, we are told, are at this time under the ſame inſpection and care, and, with the bleſſing of God, are now in the way of, and hoping for, the like happy ſucceſs. Let us now put the ſuppoſition, that no ſuch proviſion had been made amongſt us for the caſe of ſo great a number of unhappy perſons, as, by the piety of good Chriſtians, has been made in theſe hoſpitals, and let us but conſider with ourſelves, what muſt unavoidably have been the conſequence. Sickneſs and accidents would ſtill have happened, as they do, and the numbers of the unfortunate in our neighbourhood, in that caſe, had not been leſs than they are, but in all likelihood much greater; and what muſt then have become of them? Why, many of thoſe unhappy perſons, we muſt imagine, had either been left to periſh within their own habitations, which had then, in a manner, become their hoſpitals, but hoſpitals of a very wretched ſort, without advice, without medicine, without relief; or elſe perhaps they would have ventured themſelves into our ſtreets, and ſought that pity there, which they could meet with no where elſe. Would it not have given us pain to meet with objects of miſery on every ſide? Would it not have abated much of that pleaſure we now juſtly take in beholding the beauty, and riches, and magnificence of this flouriſhing city, if but

a ſmall part of the great number I have mentioned had been expoſed and ſcattered up and down in every corner, and permitted to lye languiſhing, and even expiring in our view? How much more is it for the honour of our religion and country, that as few ſights of human nature in miſery ſhould appear amongſt us, as is poſſible? That there are yet left too many ſuch, is too evident to be denied, and, I apprehend, it muſt be ſo ſtill, till the beneficent ſpirit I have been recommending, exerts itſelf yet with greater vigor amongſt us, and puts us upon doing ſomewhat yet farther for their good. May God therefore put it into our hearts zealouſly to ſet about the buſineſs of increaſing the preſent ſtreams of theſe, and likewiſe of the other charities of this city, that more perſons, in their time of need, may become partakers thereof, and be refreſhed thereby.

And, after the ſeveral motives I have already urged at large, I need not, I think uſe many words, to induce us thereto. All that I ſhall think proper to add, by way of concluſion, ſhall be, only briefly to hint to you theſe *few* things.

I obſerved to you in this diſcourſe, that there are certain qualities, which are apt to make men ſelfiſh, and to hinder them from being ſo zealous, as they ſhould be, in doing good to others. Againſt theſe qualities let us reſolve to be more eſpecially on our guard; and that we may be ſo more effectually,

Let us take care, in the *firſt* place, not to be hindred from doing good by any thing like pride, or too high a conceit of ourſelves and contempt of others; let us be ſure, that (as our bleſſed Saviour himſelf was, and as he expreſsly calls upon us to be) we be all of us *meek and lowly in heart*, and (to uſe the expreſſion of St. *Peter*) that we be *clothed with humility*. Let us remember, that the preſent life is a ſtate of trial, and not of reward, and

that

that it is not the rank of life we are in, but our conduct and deportment therein, that muſt recommend us to God, and render us of any worth or value in his ſight, and that it can be by no means concluded, becauſe one man is leſs proſperous, and in lower circumſtances, than another may be, that therefore he is leſs in God's eſteem; and this is a good reaſon, why no man ſhould think too highly of himſelf, or too meanly of his brother. Let us think leſs, than commonly we do, of the diſtance, which worldly circumſtances have put between us and our brethren, and more of the great diſtance there is between God and ourſelves; and this contemplation will ever keep us in ſuch an habit of humility, as will render us at all times apt and ready to do thoſe good offices for our brethren, which they may ſtand in need of at our hands. We ſhall then not fail to admire the infinite condeſcenſion of God, that he, *who dwelleth on high*, and *whoſe throne is in heaven*, highly exalted above all angels and archangels, *above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion*, ſhould ſo far *humble himſelf, as to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth*, and, in particular, that he ſhould ſhow ſo much kindneſs to ſuch ſinful creatures as ourſelves. It will then be but natural for us to imitate the goodneſs we admire. How can we think any man's caſe whatſoever below our notice, when we conſider, that we ourſelves, with all our ſins, and frailties, and infirmities about us, are not below the notice of the Almighty, nor without conſiderable marks and tokens of his bounty to us?

Again, That we may not be hindred from doing good by too great a love of riches, let us not think that portion of our wealth to be thrown away or miſemployed, which may procure for us the prayers of the poor and deſtitute in our behalf, and entitle us to the bleſſing of God upon the reſt of our ſubſtance. Let us perſuade ourſelves, that

the very beſt uſe we can make of riches, the *uncertain mammon* of this world, is, to make them a means of procuring for us thoſe *everlaſting habitations* ſpoken of by our Saviour, and that we can make no purchaſe with them, like the favour of God here, and eternal happineſs hereafter.

Nor, *laſtly*, let us be hindred from doing good to others, by imagining, that, without this, we have buſineſs enough to do of our own, and ſufficient to take up all our time and thoughts. For (as, I hope, I have convinced you in this diſcourſe) this is more an affair of our own, and more appertaining to us, than men are commonly apt to apprehend it; and we cannot be better employed, or more profitably for ourſelves, than when we do that good to others, which we have opportunity of doing, in obedience to the commands of God, and in expectation of his rewards.

THE END.